

Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota

Office of the Governor

Whereas, The Women Airforce Service Pilots, known as the WASP of WWII, were the first women in history to fly military bomber, transport, fighter, and training aircraft in defense of America's freedom; and,

Whereas, More than 25,000 American women applied for training, but only 1,830 were accepted and took the oath. One thousand seventy four trainees, including members from South Dakota, successfully completed the Army Air Forces flight training, graduated, and received their Army Air Forces orders to report to their assigned air base, eventually stationed at 120 Army air bases; and,

Whereas, The WASP flew 60 million miles for their country and suffered the loss of 38 comrades during their numerous tasks of towing targets, air-to-air gunnery practice, ground-to-air anti-aircraft practice, ferrying, transporting personnel and cargo, simulated strafing, smoke laying, night tracking, and flying drones; and,

Whereas, In 1944, General Arnold made a request to Congress to militarize the WASP, which was denied. The WASP were quietly and unceremoniously disbanded with no honors or benefits, leaving a missing chapter in the history of the Air Force, the history of aviation, and the history of the United States of America; and,

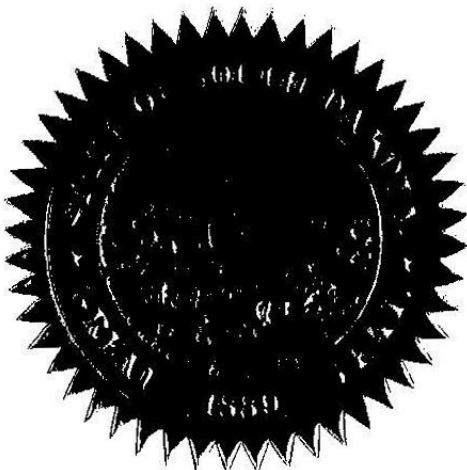
Whereas, The WASP faced overwhelming cultural and gender bias against women in nontraditional roles in order to serve their country, and, in 1977, 33 years after the WASP were disbanded, Congress voted to grant veteran status to these heroic pilots; and,

Whereas, It is altogether fitting and proper for the Governor of South Dakota to recognize the Women Airforce Service Pilots for their dedicated and outstanding service to this state and country:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim November 11, 2009, as

WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS DAY

in South Dakota.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Third Day of November in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Nine.


M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:


Chris Nelson, Secretary of State